United Nations E/CN.6/2015/INF/12

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 April 2015

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-ninth session
9-20 March 2015
Agenda item 5
Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions

Commission on the Status of Women as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming: a dialogue with functional commissions

Chair's summary

1. On 19 March 2015, the Commission on the Status of Women convened an interactive panel on the topic "Commission on the Status of Women as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming: a dialogue with functional commissions". The panel was chaired by the Chair of the Commission, Kanda Vajrabhaya, and was moderated by the President of the Economic and Social Council, Martin Sajdik. The panellists were: the Chair of the Commission on Population and Development, Bénédicte Frankinet (Belgium); Chair of the Commission for Social Development, Simona Mirela Miculescu (Romania); the Vice-Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Bente Angell-Hansen (Norway), who participated via video; the Vice-Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Victoria Romero (Mexico); and the Chief of the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Chandra Roy-Henriksen, representing a member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Mariam Wallet Mohamed Aboubakrine (Mali).

2. The Beijing Platform for Action called on Governments to "promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on girls and boys, respectively". In its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming, the Economic and Social Council defined gender mainstreaming as a "process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality". All intergovernmental bodies, including the Economic and Social

Please recycle

Council and its functional commissions, are called upon to mainstream gender perspectives into all issues under their consideration and within their mandates. The Commission on the Status of Women functions as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming and works to enhance the attention of other intergovernmental bodies to gender equality issues.

3. The functional commissions have undertaken a range of efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into their work. The Commission on Population and Development, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Commission for Social Development have discussed the gender dimensions of issues such as poverty eradication, social integration, decent work, science and technology, and ageing. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice has considered various aspects of criminal justice for women, and of violence against women, including trafficking. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development, in particular, has a dedicated Gender Advisory Board, established in 1995, to review reports and resolutions in regard to the gender dimensions of science and technology policies. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues dedicated its third session entirely to women. Functional commissions have held expert thematic discussions that have addressed gender dimensions, including those affecting marginalized groups of women and girls such as indigenous women or women with disabilities. The commissions engage with civil society, including women's organizations that have given further visibility to gender equality issues.

4. Resolutions of functional commissions and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues have increasingly incorporated a gender perspective, highlighting the opportunities and challenges faced by women in the areas of poverty eradication, migration, health, urbanization, ageing and gender gaps in science, technology and innovation. Commissions have also adopted gender-specific resolutions on violence against women, trafficking in human persons or sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. Speakers welcomed resolutions of the Commission on the Status of Women that addressed priority issues of other functional commissions. Given the importance of data disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity to inform policymaking and to close specific gender gaps, speakers called upon the Commission on the Status of Women and the Statistical Commission to continue to give priority to such data and to gender statistics and indicators.

5. Speakers recognized the importance of gender mainstreaming in the future implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and supported in this regard the proposal for a stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls as well as for integrating gender-sensitive targets in other goals.

6. Participants agreed that gender mainstreaming is a strategy that is applicable to all areas and therefore must be an integral part of the entire work of the functional commissions. Speakers supported closer collaboration on a range of matters and through different means, and encouraged further harmonization and coordination among the functional commissions on themes and issues. They recommended closer collaboration on working methods and work programmes to ensure complementarity and sector-specific value added. Enhanced coordination should aim to maximize synergies among the functional commissions. Joint discussions could be held regularly on common thematic areas, taking into account also the annual main theme of the Economic and Social Council. To facilitate stronger coordination, a mapping of topics and processes of the functional

commissions could be undertaken. In addition, gender focal points could be appointed in the functional commissions to improve gender mainstreaming in their work. Increased collaboration could also facilitate common messaging on gender equality in regard to the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and other intergovernmental processes.

7. The important role of the respective secretariats of the functional commissions in facilitating gender mainstreaming in their work was highlighted. Speakers emphasized the need for reports of the Secretary-General to reflect gender issues, and for commission secretariats to work collaboratively and identify common topics for discussions. Secretariats of functional commissions also needed to provide the necessary support to the commissions. It was also suggested that commission secretariats should be represented in the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.

8. Participants welcomed the discussion with the chairs and vice-chairs of the functional commissions during this session of the Commission on the Status of Women and applauded the role of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of women (UN-Women) in facilitating such a discussion and in providing technical expertise on gender mainstreaming. They encouraged a continuation of such dialogues among the functional commissions and proposed to consider conducting similar dialogues on other cross-cutting themes. Beyond the work of the functional commissions, participants called on Member States to demonstrate political leadership to ensure a holistic approach to gender mainstreaming across sectors, and in all intergovernmental processes and for providing secure space to civil society organizations in all forums.

9. Speakers provided examples of how they were mainstreaming gender equality across sectors at the national level. These included putting in place institutional mechanisms such as women's affairs or gender advisory offices, the appointment of gender focal points across ministries to support the integration of gender mainstreaming in policies, plans and programmes; adopting the methodology of gender-responsive budgeting; putting in place mechanisms for monitoring and accountability including by collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data, and instituting regular reporting on gender mainstreaming efforts and results by each governmental agency.

10. Participants identified concrete actions to ensure successful gender mainstreaming, including skills training and capacity-building on gender analysis, collection and use of sex- and age-disaggregated data, and integrating a gender perspective in monitoring and evaluations. In addition to gender mainstreaming, speakers also called for a human rights-based approach to policy.